



Fig. 1: *Aeginetia pedunculata* (Roxb.) Wall. a-b. Habitat, c. Calyx, d. Corolla split open with stamens, e. Stamen with anther spurred, f. stamen without spurred, pollen grains, h. Pistil, i. Stigma with part of style

Bihar) 24.viii.1997, Coll. Sanjib Kumar 529. Confirmed with C.B. Clarke no. 21793 D Jessore (25.vi.1874) Acc No. 329511 CAL.

February 14, 1998

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We are thankful to Dr. M. Sanjappa, Deputy Director and In-charge, Central National Herbarium, Howrah (Botanical Survey of India) for providing herbarium and library facilities.

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32. A NEW VARIETY OF *COSTUS SPECIOSUS* (RETZ.) SM.

(With one plate)

*Costus speciosus* (Retz.) Sm. var. *dilnavazii* (var. nov.) this variety was first observed by the senior author near Film City, Goregaon, Mumbai. It was growing side by side

with the typical variety of the species. The specimens of both the typical and the new variety were collected and studied by dissecting floral parts. Except the coloration of the corolla and the basal portion of the labellum, no other morphological differences were observed. Therefore, this new taxon is considered as a variation in *Costus speciosus* (Retz.) Sm. and a new varietal name *Costus speciosus* (Retz.) Sm. var. *dilnavazii* M.R. Almeida & S.M. Almeida var. nov. is proposed in honour of Mrs. Dilnavaz Variava, Vice President of Bombay Natural History Society in recognition of her contribution to the conservation movement in India.

The main differences in the two varieties are as follows:

*Costus speciosus* (Retz.) Sm.: 1. Corolla pure white in colour. 2. Labellum with yellow centre.  
*Costus speciosus* var. *dilnavazii* Almeida & Almeida: 1. Corolla rose-pink in colour.

2. Labellum pink throughout.

Colour pictures of both the varieties which were taken on subsequent trips are given in Plate 1.

The rhizomes of this new variety have been planted in the premises of the Conservation Education Centre, Bombay Natural History Society, Goregaon, Mumbai.

**Holotype:** Goregaon (M.R. Almeida - G - 501, BLAT).

*Costus speciosus* (Retz.) Sm. var. *dilnavazii* var. nov. similis varietas typicus differt corolibus roseus et corolibus basi non flavus. Holotypus: M.R. Almeida - G - 501, lectus at Goregaon, mense Augusto 1997, Depositus at BLAT.

March 2, 1998

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### 33. *ASPARAGUS DENSIFLORUS* 'SPRENGERI' ROBUSTUS - AN ADDITION TO THE ORNAMENTAL FLORA OF ANDAMANS

The genus *Asparagus*, which includes the edible vegetable *A. officinalis*, also has a number of species and varieties grown indoors for their attractive feathery foliage, consisting of finely divided and flattened modified branchlets resembling leaves. Indoor asparagus plants are commonly called asparagus ferns because of their superficial resemblance to the foliage of pteridophyte ferns.

As far as ornamental value is concerned, *A. asparagoides* (Smilax), *A. densiflorus* (Mayeri and Sprengeri), *A. falcatum* (Sicklethorn), and *A. plumosus* syn. *A. setaceus* (Asparagus fern), are some of the exotic species or varieties which are of common use in gardens and as indoor plants in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. Reports on the flora of Andaman (Vasudeva Rao, 1986) reveal that *A. racemosus* grows wild in the Andamans.

During an exploration of horticultural flora of Andamans, *Asparagus densiflorus* 'Sprengeri' Robustus was found growing wild on rocks in forests of Mundapahar, Chidyatappu, South Andaman. The present report on the occurrence of this species in the islands is of great phytogeographical as well as floristic interest.

**Specimen examined:** South Andaman Mundapahar, Chidyatappu on rocks near the seashore.

The plant is of strong growing habit and has pliable drooping stems, about a metre long. The stems are lightly covered with 1-1.5 cm long, soft, needle-like branchlets which usually grow in groups of 4-5 at the node. The colour of foliage is dull green. The stem near the joint of branchlets or below that bears small (0.5 cm) thorns. The plant bears 4-5 clumps at the base.